

EAST AND WEST DEBATE ON WOMAN

India's Law of Manu Is Severe to Wives

MYSTERIOUS INDIA. By Robert Chauvelot. Translated from the French by Eleanor Stimson Brooks. The Century Company.

WITHOUT doubt India is beautiful, grand, moving. Yet I dare to affirm that far more than anything else it is interesting. "Interesting" is indeed the word that seems most suited to this immense reservoir of thinking humanity. The adjective beautiful suits her only partially, in certain regions scattered over the map, of which the north, the Himalaya especially, is the chief crown. In other parts there is nothing but melancholy plains, arid deserts, brackish and dried up pools. The jungle itself, so rich and luxuriant in the northern parts of the empire, is often nothing but tall and sunbaked underbrush, of which the tropical vegetation consists principally of aloes and cacti. So we read in the introduction. M. Chauvelot takes us on trips through many parts of India not well known to the average reader, to wonderful temples, which he describes to the minutest detail. He is indeed an artist with a pen, and his word pictures are very clear.

The author, who is a son-in-law of Alphonse Daudet, has met many Indian Princes in Paris, and has visited India twice at their invitation. On both occasions he has absorbed something of native Indian high life and he presents it to his readers in a very fascinating style.

A subject which interested M. Chauvelot greatly was the women of India. He has much to say about the conditions under which they live, their betrothal and their marriage.

The law of Manu, a sort of religious, civil and moral catechism, contains in its pages admonitions such as these: (For the young man contemplating marriage.)

"Let him who wishes to marry not espouse a girl having red hair, or limb too many (?), or who is often ill, or who is insupportable by virtue of her loquacity. But let him take a well formed woman, who has the graceful gait of a swan or a young elephant (!) and whose hair is fine, her teeth small, her limbs of a pleasurable softness."

(For the woman once married): "If the conduct of the husband is blameworthy, if he gives himself over to other loves, and even if he is without good qualities, the wife must remain virtuous and constantly revere him as a god."

"No betrothed girl," adds M. Chauvelot, "no wife, no widow in the universe leads a life so painful, so rigorous, so closely shut in. I have travelled all over Europe and the northern countries. I have seen the distress of the women among the nomad peoples of the extreme North. I have also had an opportunity to observe the physical imprisonment and moral disenchantment of the Orientals in the land of the Crescent, their effacement in the Celestial Empire, their puerility in the land of the Rising Sun; later, in Oceania or during long months of exploration, I have sailed around islands and archipelagos and seen to what a state of in-

feriority the Papua women of New Guinea and the Maori women of New Zealand had fallen, those Maoris who yet rival our own Tahitian women in charm. Well! I must confess that not in the polar regions, not in the harems of Algeria, Tunisia, Turkey, Egypt or Arabia, not in the Far East, not in Australia, nor in Polynesia, nor even among the redskins of America have I witnessed a downfall of the feminine sex so irremediable, so heart-rending as in the women's quarters among the Brahmans.

We know that the men of every country would rejoice if the names of their women friends had but come under this law:

"The name of a woman should be easy to pronounce, sweet, clear and agreeable; it should end in long vowels and resemble words of benediction." The wedding is a gorgeous affair at which are present the nobility of France and native Princes of India. And wedding gifts? Well, there were these few little things from his Highness the Maharajah of Kashmir to the young couple of Kapurthala: An elephant, six horses and 15,000 rupees. Another Prince, less rich, gave three camels, two horses and a dozen falcons, and another some Bokhara rugs, a collar of pearls and draperies embroidered with gold. What presents they give in India!

And after the marriage: A divorce?

Just listen: "A sterile woman," declares the law of Manu, "may be replaced at the end of eight years; one whose children are all dead, in the tenth year; one who has brought into the world only daughters (a stigma of inferiority) in the eleventh year, and one who speaks sharply at once." A thorough repudiation, made before the Brahmans, takes the place of the official proceedings of non-reconciliation, constituting *ipso facto* the divorce.

Cannibalism in the South Seas

SAVAGES. By Gordon Ray Young. Doubleday, Page & Co.

THE South Sea Islands have been very much idealized in fiction, but Mr. Young's book has all the marks of the authentic. The scene is chiefly laid on the Island of Gopassia. Gilbert Long went to this region seeking vengeance on the woman who had wedded his brother and then poisoned him. He was taken aboard the ship of Hurricane Williams, a man who had learned to love the savages more than his own race and to understand their viewpoint even to the extent of permitting cannibalism among his swarthy followers. With such a man to help him, Gilbert finally succeeded in his quest, although he met many thrilling adventures. He fell in love with Uala, a native girl, but decided that it was his fate to return to the drab civilization of his own race.

J. C. Snaith, whose new novel, "The Council of Seven" (Appleton), has just been published, is addicted to cricket, and his ardor for the game sent him this fall on a fortnight's tour in England. One of the other members of the team was another novelist, Ralph Straus, author of "Pengard Awake."

Opening Up Wilder Canada

TRAILMAKERS OF THE NORTH-WEST. By Paul L. Haworth. Harcourt, Brace & Co.

THE last frontier is to be found in Western Canada. The Peace River country still holds a lure for those with pioneering instincts. However, it is now undergoing a great change. The homesteader is beginning



Some of the trailmakers are four-footed.

to plant grain in dismal regions which it was once believed would be forever vacant except for the trapper and the Indian. It is even believed that this may be a great oil country, and hence a bulwark of civilization. Its earlier days become all the more worthy of record.

Mr. Haworth has an unusual equipment for his task. He knows the country very thoroughly, and he has also achieved distinction as a historian. If his canvases were on a larger scale he might almost rival Parkman as a painter of the frontier du bois.

The first chapter in the book deals with the life history of the beaver, and explains how the demand for his fur led to great discoveries and then the epic of exploration is described in glowing colors. We learn of the hardships encountered by the discoverers of Hudson's Bay, by Pierre Radisson

in founding the Hudson's Bay Company, and by Samuel Hearne in seeking a copper mine, by De la Verendrye in trying to find the Western sea and by Alexander MacKenzie in reaching the Arctic and the Pacific. In these chapters the heroic figures are drawn so as to stand out closely against their wild background. The second portion of the book



shows us the Hudson's Bay Company at the zenith of its power. The interesting career of Alexander Henry is described in vivid manner. We are told the methods of travel in the fur land, how the Red River halfbreeds hunted the buffalo, and given much further information about Indian life. The story of exploration in this period is adequately treated.

Mr. Haworth then shows us that recent times have not dulled the lure of the Northwest. He describes the voyage of Amundsen through the Arctic ice, an exploit worthy of the ancient Vikings. The new order is depicted in the chapter on The Coming of the Settlers. In the final chapter on The Brotherhood of Trappers and Prospectors of To-day Mr. Haworth is at his best, for he is writing of that which is within his own experience.

"The Truth" About Her

SHE SAYS, SAYS SHE: GUIDE BOOK TO WOMEN. By James E. P. Dutton & Co.

THE "Guidebook to Women" is one of those economical Christmas gifts. After a copy has been sent to an elderly aunt or a pettish uncle this year, there will be no further need of gifts in that quarter. The younger generation, however, will doubtless be more appreciative, and not quite so offended. Truth has climbed out of her well to invade the pages of the volume, but quite, quite nakedly. The elderly aunt will undoubtedly refuse to recognize or receive her.

Of course the author refuses to sign his name to his work. As James James he is safe from his friends—if indeed he has any. And as James James he commits to print many discoveries and comments upon woman—and women. Some of these discoveries are new—others are as old as Eden's apple. Some

are indubitably reminiscent—others are purely imaginary. The comments are hackneyed, for the most part, although occasionally novel. At least James James has been thorough—Britishly thorough.

James James is either an Englishman or he isn't. To be sure, he thinks in English currency and mentions Ethel Dred instead of Eleanor Porter—but surely no man educated in England would forsake accuracy to write: "Men can tell her, brutally, the whole truth about her, and forget the only thing that matters, herself. And she merely smiles, as Monna Vanna smiles through the centuries, a secret smile, a smile meant for every man, though each of us interprets it differently." (Italics are ours.)

Again the nudity complex—first "Truth"—and now Monna Vanna—not to mention the typical woman whom the author X-rays to the eye of curious man in the chapter on "Woman: Her Dress."

Much of the book is amusing—though irritating. Irritating not in its frankness but in its cleverness. Frequently the reader is willing to concede to James James a deep understanding of human nature and human frailty—and then just at the moment of concession the author's evil genius nudges him and whispers: "Now, be clever—you haven't pulled anything witty since page 18." "Gosh, that's so," says James James, and forthwith wearily consults his notes and brings up some triteness, such as "For the most important discovery yet recorded about woman is that she does not mean half what she looks and does not mean anything she says"—and the reader is tempted to close the book. The maiden aunt doubtless will. Perhaps it is just as well.

There are other moments—moments for instance such as the one which convinces the reader that James James never watched Mollie Bjurstedt play. If he had he would not have descended to the cheap paragraph on the sex-consciousness of women which ends: "The greatest girl tennis player's mind is never entirely devoted to the game. She is always conscious that she is a woman, and she would rather lose the game than have her hair come down on the tennis court."

In effect James James is a nice old fashioned person who refuses to be modern and still lives in the quaint antebellum days of unobbed hair and helpless femininity. He sneers at the business woman and insists that woman's place is in the home. Therefore he is at his best in his chapters concerning those antiquitous institutions, marriage and the home. His understanding of the perfect lady is thorough; but that is the extent of his understanding and of his knowledge. If Altmouth Wright ever enjoyed a kitchin moment we should expect him to be James James.

The curious twist of the subject-matter provides much more revealing information concerning men than concerning women. There are few of us who learn much we didn't know before from the dicta of James James—that is, about women; but many of us will appreciate his unwitting confessions concerning himself and similarly minded brethren. For example, ad- vices the author:

"Try this experiment. No matter what sort of woman you are, the next time you are in a train give the dis- creetest glad eye to the most respect- able man you see. Will he give you the haughty, touch-me-not stare of grim respectability? Will he, even when he is not with his wife, blush furiously and straighten his tie? Will he escape

at the next stopping place and hasten blubbering home to his wife?

"No; he will instantly sit up and take notice. That is his job, taking notice. He will return your glance and your greeting; and he will willingly pay another fare in order to get out of the train when you do. Where women are concerned a man does not worry over the expense. They are worth it every time, except when you are married to one of them."

CORNELIA P. LATHROP.

He Says, Says He:

GUIDE BOOK TO WOMEN. By James E. P. Dutton & Co.

IN this Baedeker of the Beloved the author considers Woman under ten heads—one for each of the commandments. But the titles of these chapters hold no hint of shafts or shafts not—they are simply such abstract words as Her Beauty, Dress, Work, Types, Brain, Soul, Life, Religion, Job and Herself. There are two prefaces, marked "For Men Only" and "For Women Only," like—tables in some dairy restaurants. It is not unkind to say that neither man, woman nor curate could extract very much information of any useful sort from either of these clusters of remarks, which are introductory simply to the thickest patch of woods in Nature—one in which most persons are lost beyond any help from book knowledge.

The author's name is given as "James James," but on the quite contrary it might better be "Mary Mary," for it does not seem reasonable to believe that any man could have composed so catty a series of general and particular reflections. Another reason for suspecting feminine authorship is the capacity for giving a paradoxical turn to the simplest statement or formula of action. The author always leaves a hole big enough to crawl out of, and the blandly innocent manner of the whole thing is quite indicative of the indeterminate and retroactive tendency toward mind-changing which is proverbially the prerogative of ladies fair and unfair.

This is not to say that various down-right assertions are not made; the curious thing about some of them is that their very dogmatism holds a suggestion that a bold face is being put on the subject and a cocksure manner assumed to cover faulty masquerading as supernatural knowledge. The book is stuffed full of general statements all made in a tone of conviction actually bored with its own certainty. Now, since (as the witty Frenchman remarked) all general statements are untrue—including this one, it is fairly obvious that, having started on a high pitch, the author intends to brazen it out. And yet much of it does sound alarmingly true. And we suspect that some is much truer even than it sounds.

It would be unfair to the many persons who would like to know what this small book contains before paying for it not to have a few samples drawn. Here is one from the Woman Only preface:

"Woman cherishes her profound ignorance of herself; she prides her inability to explain herself. Provided her mystery makes her mysterious to men she does not worry about it. She thinks herself a Sphinx, eternally asking herself the conundrum of herself—and she doesn't care in the least if the answer is a lemon. She exists in a beautiful haze; she halos herself in iridescent vagueness. Yet beneath her apparent vacillations woman knows, deep down in her subconsciousness, exactly what she wants, and despite her hesitations she moves unconsciously directly to her goal. Nature has endowed her with the faculty of getting there."

"Woman's brains are not tucked away inside her skull where they can't be seen, but spread in a thin layer all over the outside of her body. Her brains are her figure and her beauty. Her brains are all displayed in the shop window, invitingly arranged. They are tickled 'complexion,' 'figure,' 'hair,' 'skin,' 'beauty,' 'attractiveness,' 'charm,' 'youth,' 'sex.' . . . She has a shop window soul. No wonder that men delight in gazing at that window. After this handful of pebbles thrown against the 'shop window' it may be fair to pull out another stop in this organ of authority:

"The last person a man thinks of when the word 'woman' is mentioned is his grandmother. Woman to us [men] is beauty, attractiveness and rounded youth. And that is just what she is to herself. All these attributes she cherishes far above rubies, and none of them lasts as long as rubies. Her one talent, beauty, she bears through the world—it is all she has—and it blossoms, fades and dies; but there is nothing else in this life of ours that is as wonderful and as precious? . . . The great gift of woman's beauty is a rare gift. Otherwise that gift, staled by custom, would be valueless."

"Woman's beauty, however, is not made up of simple facts like a beautiful face or nice eyes. . . . It is something more elusive and more alluring than these mere accessories. It lies in her vivacity of mind and body, the variety of her expressions and her actions, her instinctive charm and grace, her ever present but unconscious sex appeal. Man is an uncouth brute compared with her. But she likes him uncouth. . . . She is infinite variety. . . . She never comes to the end of her tricks; she is always an exciting thing to keep about the house."

And so on. The book is full of talk something like this—some better, some not so good. "Woman's Work" is declared to be a dull subject, but "Her Dress" is a theme for a poet and philosopher. It is probably true that a woman wrote this book—for the cattiness of it in spots; but it is a woman

who knows quite as much about men as she does about women. And it may be also that she has consulted directly with some of her men friends, as well as commandeered their ideas, caught up perhaps surreptitiously and by the way. It is a "guide book" to lead into a jungle, but it is by no means devoid of interest and stimulation. This book is very much more clever and deserving than you might suppose from your first glance at it.

W. S. MOODY.

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